

REMARKS

In response to the Final Action, Applicant proposes amending claims 2-6, 9-11, 13-15, and 17-21, and canceling claims 1, 7, 8, and 10. Thus, claims 2-6, 9, and 11-21 are currently pending in the application. Applicant respectfully requests entry of the above amendments to place the application in clear condition for allowance, or in the alternative, in better form for appeal. The proposed amendments do not add new issues and are fully supported by the Applicant's original disclosure. Independent claim 1 and dependent claims 7, 8, and 10 have been canceled to obviate all outstanding rejections, while dependent claims 2-6 and 9 have been rewritten to depend from allowable claim 11.

Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 11-21 have been allowed. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and timely withdrawal of the rejections of the remaining pending claims for the reasons discussed below.

Specification

Applicant proposes to amend the specification to correct a number of typographical or other minor errors. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §102 Rejection

Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) for being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 6,253,736 to Crofts. Applicant proposes canceling indeed claim 1 and dependent claims 7, 8, and 10 and amending dependent claims 2-6 and 9 to depend from allowable claim 11, to thereby render this rejection moot.

While Applicant does not acquiesce that the combination of features recited in claims 1, 7, 8, and 10 are anticipated or rendered unpatentable over the applied art of record, in order to expedite prosecution, Applicant has canceled the above-noted claims and rewritten the remaining pending dependent claims to depend from allowable claim 11. Applicant asserts that the cancellation of the above-noted claims should not be considered a surrender of the subject-matter recited therein.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-6 and 9 are allowable by virtue of their dependency on allowable claim 11.


Other Matters

Applicant proposes amending claims 9, 11, 13-15, and 17-21 for claim consistency and/or to correct typographical errors. Therefore, these amendments do not narrow the claims' scope, and were not made for reasons related to patentability or for distinguishing the invention over the art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-6, 9, and 11-21 are allowable upon entry of the proposed amendments.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all of the claims are patentably distinct from the art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below, if needed. Applicant hereby makes a written conditional petition for extension of time, if required. Please charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to **Attorney's Deposit Account No. 23-1951.**

Respectfully submitted,



William S. Foster, Jr.
Reg. No. 51,695

Richard S. Meyer
Reg. No. 32,541

Date: September 12, 2005

McGuireWoods LLP
1750 Tysons Boulevard
Suite 1800
McLean, VA 22102-4215
Tel: 703.712.5135
Fax: 703.712.5296

\\COM\524854